GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1061
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2003
ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ON LINKING OF RIVERS
SURESH KURUP

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any study on the impact on environment as a result of linking of rivers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SMT. BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) & (b) Ministry of Water Resources, then known as the Ministry of Irrigation, formulated a National Perspective for water resources development in 1980 which envisages inter linkages among Peninsular Rivers and Himalayan Rivers for transferring water from surplus basins to water deficit areas for optimum utilisation of water resources. The Government of India has established the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in 1982 as an autonomous society to carryout water balance and other studies and prepare feasibility reports. The NWDA hasidentified 30 linkages for preparing feasibility report of which feasibility reports for six links have been completed. The study of environmental and ecological aspects of interbasin water transfer link projects forms part of the feasibility studies undertaken by National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in respect of everylink under National Perspective for water resources development. As per these studies, beneficial impacts of the link projects include providing water supply for domestic, irrigation and industrial uses, mitigation of floods in the rivers down stream of reservoirs, recreation, pisciculture, power generation, employment avenues, socio-economic upliftment of people, improvement in ground water recharge etc.

The major undesirable impacts will be due to submergence under reservoirs and land acquisition for the link canal. To the extent possible, existing and ongoing projects are proposed for integration in the link proposals without creation of any additional storage. Thus, every effort is made to minimize the rehabilitation and the resettlement (R&R) problems due to the link peojects.In respect of projects proposed by States/NWDAforming part of the link proposals, adequate provision has been made to take care of R&R aspects, compensatory afforestation etc. Mostly, the link proposals are so aligned to avoid forests, habitations, National Monuments/Parks.